



Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND
CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Kimberly Shunk

SUBJECT: SAN JOSÉ *PREPARED!*
EXPANSION

DATE: May 17, 2006

Approved

/s/

Date 05/18/06

SUMMARY

The Mayor's March Budget Message requested staff to "bring forward a budget proposal to expand San José *Prepared!* to new neighborhoods throughout the city. This expansion should include a plan to create new neighborhood teams and to expand the number of families trained through an abbreviated training program."

This report identifies current gaps within the city's neighborhoods and includes a work plan to begin addressing these gaps as well as expand the program. The work plan has a goal of training 500 residents this next year. The Mayor's Budget Message identified the ambitious goal of training all neighborhoods in three years.

The Office of Emergency Services (OES) will take the lead on this assignment.

BACKGROUND

The San José *Prepared!* program educates residents about disaster preparedness and provides training in basic disaster response skills, such as fire safety and suppression, search and rescue, and disaster medical operations. Using their San José *Prepared!* training, residents increase their level of self-sufficiency and are trained to assist others in their neighborhood following a disaster. With its all-hazards approach, the program helps residents prepare themselves for a range of natural and human-caused disasters, including earthquakes, fires, floods, terrorist attacks, and pandemic influenza.

The San José *Prepared!* program started in 1995 with one full time position. After Hurricane Katrina in August 2005, demand for classes increased substantially. The existing staff of one person, a Training Specialist, has not been able to absorb the workload, cover existing gaps in neighborhoods, or expand the program.

GAPS IN NEIGHBORHOOD PREPAREDNESS

The City of San José has identified 429 neighborhoods that need preparedness training, with a goal of having at least 2 active San José *Prepared!* team members in each neighborhood. Today, there are approximately 1,430 graduates from the program who represent 128 neighborhoods, or 30% of the 429 total. By definition, then, gaps currently exist in neighborhoods throughout the entire city.

OES will focus initial outreach on the 301 underserved neighborhoods. The challenge will be to ensure that residents from these underserved neighborhoods are interested in participating in this voluntary program. Historically, the program's success has been because of word-of-mouth endorsements. As a result, participating neighborhoods often have many residents who complete training while other neighborhoods remain completely unrepresented.

Some of the most apparent gaps in neighborhood participation seem to be related to the length of time to complete this 20-hour program and/or language barriers. Working adults, especially those with children in school, may find it difficult to attend class 5 Saturdays in a row to complete the course. To date, the San José *Prepared!* program has been offered in Spanish, though no one has signed up for the classes. The program has not been available in Vietnamese.

WORKPLAN

A two-pronged approach needs to occur in order to expand the San José *Prepared!* program and fill gaps in neighborhood preparedness.

First, one 4-hour class will be developed to promote basic disaster preparedness for residents and their families. This abbreviated course will teach people how to be prepared to remain on their own for 7-10 days after a major disaster, since government services and utilities will probably not be available for at least that long. Optimistically, this class would be available in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese within the first six months of the new fiscal year. In order to achieve this:

- Curriculum will have to be refined so that anyone completing the new short course could also complete the 20-hour program, if desired.
- Manuals will have to be translated into Spanish and Vietnamese; all manuals will have to be formatted and published.
- Instructors will have to be recruited, trained, and certified.
- Finally, outreach to the neighborhoods will require a focused effort in order to get enough people interested in attending class.

Second, the 20-hour course will be expanded to Spanish- and Vietnamese-speaking residents. This endeavor may take two or three years to come to fruition. In order to achieve this:

- Manuals will have to be translated into Vietnamese.
- Spanish- and Vietnamese-speaking instructors will have to be recruited, trained, and certified.

- Outreach to the neighborhoods will require a focused effort.
- Shortcutting the above process by offering on-the-spot translations of a class taught in English is one way to begin to introduce the curriculum to a new community. However, this is not an optimal long-term solution since the learning experience is not equal to that in which all components of the course match.

Ideally, residents would complete the 20-hour course, since the goal is still to have 2 people complete the 20-hour course in each neighborhood. However, with respect to emergency preparedness, some training is better than no training at all, so the 4-hour class offers an intermediate solution.

SERVICE DELIVERY

Currently, the San José *Prepared!* program relies on a combination of classroom lecture and hands-on training to achieve the desired goal of citizen self-reliance. The lone Training Specialist dedicated to this program trains, on average, 125 residents each year. In order to reach 500 residents this next year, and in the years to follow, several components need to be added to the existing program:

- Full time staff
- Volunteer instructors
- Distance learning
- Community outreach

Full time staff

OES is requesting one Senior Analyst position in order to expand the San José *Prepared!* Program. This position would be responsible for a variety of support functions, including management of federal grants; applying for, preparing, and monitoring program budgets; submitting reimbursement requests; preparing contracts and monitoring sub-grantees; and responding to audits. This individual would develop strategies to optimize effectiveness and efficiency of the new abbreviated San José *Prepared!* training and program expansion, as well as recommend fees to recover some of the cost for class materials.

The addition of a Senior Analyst will relieve the Training Specialist of the duties described above, enabling him to spend more time providing classroom instruction as well as recruiting, training, and certifying instructors.

Volunteer instructors

Community volunteers and interested city staff may be potential sources for instructors. Effective advertising about this new opportunity will be a key to recruiting. Training and certification for instructors will be a new component of this program.

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Distance learning

OES plans to explore the possibility of developing a distance-learning course through partnerships with community colleges, local universities, and businesses. A simple first step in this process would involve posting course materials on the OES website.

Community outreach

Partnerships with existing neighborhood associations and programs like Neighborhood Watch provide ready-made audiences for the abbreviated course. The Strategic Neighborhood Initiative (SNI) is another venue for identifying groups that would benefit from participation in San José *Prepared!* classes. Outreach to special needs communities will be explored with assistance from the Volunteer Center of Silicon Valley, Inc.

As part of the effort to identify underserved neighborhoods, the Office of Emergency Services will map locations of those neighborhoods that already have teams using a Geographic Information System. This effort will also allow OES to more easily identify neighborhoods that may benefit from refresher training.

Overall, the above strategy needs to be explored in more detail. Success is largely contingent on the addition of a Senior Analyst to ensure that these new program components are developed, implemented, and then monitored for effectiveness and citizen satisfaction.

/s/

KIMBERLY SHUNK

Director, Office of Emergency Services